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A-10 *

No Watchdog Wanted

Democratic Senator McCarthy of Minnesota has added his voice to that of Democratic Senator Gruening of Alaska. They want a congressional committee to watch or to investigate the CIA. (Senator Gruening also wanted to send a United States gunboat to the Caribbean to reinstate Juan Bosch as president of the Dominican Republic.) Their arguments are unimpressive to say the least.

The President was asked about this at his news conference last week, and replied as follows:

I think the present [system] is best, considering the sensitive nature of the Central Intelligence Agency's work.

As you know, there is a congressional committee in the House and one in the Senate composed of members of the Appropriations Committee and the Armed Services Committee, and they meet frequently with Mr. McCone [CIA Director] and he also testifies before the foreign relations committees of House and Senate and the general Armed Services Committee. And I think that Congress through that organization has the means of keeping a liaison with him.

In addition, I have an Advisory Council . . . which . . . serves as an advisory committee to me on the work of the intelligence community. I am well satisfied with the present arrangement.

If the President is against a watchdog committee (and we're glad he is) why are Senators Gruening and McCarthy on the opposing side? Does Mr. Kennedy not know what he is talking about? Or do the Senators prefer to put their trust in newspaper comments like those cited by the Senator from Minnesota—comments which were both misinformed and misleading?

This watchdog scheme, based on vague misgivings and suspicions, has been raised year after year in Congress. It has never gotten anywhere and we don't think it deserves to get anywhere unless it can be shown that the CIA isn't doing the job it is supposed to do. Nothing approaching such a showing